

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-34. (Canceled)

Claim 35. (Previously presented) A process for the preparation of lactic acid, comprising:

growing, in a fermentation medium containing a carbon source, a yeast strain transformed with at least one copy of a gene coding for lactate dehydrogenase functionally linked to a promoter sequence allowing the expression of the gene in the yeast strain, wherein the yeast strain produces lactic acid at a yield from 0.5 gram lactic acid per gram glucose to 0.881 gram lactic acid per gram glucose, and wherein the transformed yeast strain has undergone deletion of one or more pyruvate decarboxylase genes or pyruvate dehydrogenase genes, to produce lactic acid, wherein the yeast strain can grow or maintain its population at the pH of the fermentation medium, wherein the initial pH of the fermentation medium is higher than 4.5; and,

recovering the lactic acid from the fermentation medium.

Claim 36. (Previously presented) The process of claim 35, wherein the carbon source is selected from glucose, fructose, galactose, lactose, sucrose, raffinose, maltose, cellobiose, arabinose, or xylose.

Claim 37. (Previously presented) The process of claim 35, wherein the fermentation medium contains less than 5 mM of Mg^{++} , less than 0.02 mM of Zn^{++} , or both.

Claim 38. (Currently amended) The process of claim 35, wherein at the time recovering is performed the fermentation medium has a pH of 7 or less.

Claim 39. (Currently amended) The process of claim 38, wherein the at the time recovering is performed the fermentation medium has a pH is of 4.5 or less.

Claim 40. (Currently amended) The process of claim 39, wherein the at the time recovering is performed the fermentation medium has a pH is of 3 or less.

Claim 41. (Previously presented) The process of claim 35, wherein the lactic acid is D-lactic acid or L-lactic acid.

Claim 42. (Previously presented) The process of claim 35, wherein recovering comprises extracting lactic acid into an immiscible solvent phase.

Claim 43. (Previously presented) The process of claim 35, wherein recovering comprises distillation of lactic acid or an ester thereof.